IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 to 12 as follows. Note that all claims currently pending in this application, including those presently being amended, have been reproduced below.

---

1. (Currently Amended) ~~An image recording and~~ reproducing device comprising:

a reproducing unit adapted to reproduce image data from a recording medium;

an embedding unit adapted to embed specific information into the image data using a digital watermarking technique; and

a selecting unit adapted to select whether the specific information is embedded into the image data or not in accordance with user's instruction.

~~record processing means for recording image data on a first recording area of a recording medium and recording specific information on a second recording area of said recording medium;~~

~~reproduction processing means for reproducing said first and second recording areas; and~~

~~means for converting said reproduced specific information to electric information, which is difficult to recognize, so that said electric information is selectively combined with said image data.~~

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A device~~ <u>Device</u> according to claim 1, <u>wherein the embedding unit is adapted to embed the specific information into the image data without decompressing the image data.</u>

~~multiplexing means for multiplexing said converted electric information, which is difficult to recognize, and said reproduced image data, to output; and~~

~~selecting means for selecting said multiplexed data obtained from said multiplexing means or said reproduced image data to output.~~

3. (Currently Amended) <u>A device</u> ~~Device~~ according to claim 1, <u>wherein the reproducing unit is adapted to reproduce the specific information from the recording medium recording the image data</u>

~~generating means for generating said specific information.~~

4. (Currently Amended) <u>A device</u> ~~Device~~ according to claim 1, wherein <u>the reproducing unit adapted to reproduce the specific information from another recording medium</u> ~~said first recording area is provided on a first recording medium and said second recording area is provided on a second recording medium.~~

5. (Currently Amended) An image ~~recording and~~ reproducing method comprising the steps of:

~~recording~~ <u>reproducing</u> image data <u>from</u> ~~on a first recording area of~~ a recording medium ~~and recording specific information on a second recording area of said recording medium;~~

- 3 -

embedding specific information into the image data using a digital watermarking technique; and

selecting whether the ~~converting said reproduced~~ specific information is embedded into the ~~to electric information, which is difficult to recognize, so that said electric information is selectively combined with said~~ image data or not in accordance with user's instruction.

6.   (Currently Amended) A method ~~Method~~ according to claim 5, wherein the embedding step is a step of embedding the specific information into the image data without decompressing the image data.

~~multiplexing said converted electric information, which is difficult to recognize, and said reproduced image data, to output; and~~

~~selecting said multiplexed data or said reproduced image data to output.~~

7.   (Currently Amended) A method ~~Device~~ according to claim 5, wherein the reproducing step is a step of reproducing the specific information from the recording medium recording the image data. ~~further comprising a step of:~~

~~generating said specific information.~~

8.   (Currently Amended) A method ~~Device~~ according to claim 5, wherein the reproducing step is a step of reproducing the specific information from another ~~said first recording area is provided on a first recording medium, and said second recording area is provided on a second recording~~ medium.

- 4 -

9. (Currently Amended) A ~~storage~~ ~~memory~~ medium ~~storing a program~~ for executing an image reproducing method, the image reproducing method ~~readable with computer~~, comprising the steps ~~processing~~ of:

~~recording image data on a first recording area of a recording medium and recording specific information on a second recording area of said recording medium;~~

reproducing image data from a ~~said first and second~~ recording medium ~~areas; and~~

embedding specific information into the image data using a digital watermarking technique; and

selecting whether the ~~converting said reproduced~~ specific information is embedded into the ~~to electric information, which is difficult to recognize, so that said electric information is selectively combined with said~~ image data or not in accordance with user's instruction.

10. (Currently Amended) A storage ~~Memory~~ medium according to claim 9, wherein the embedding step is a step of embedding the specific information into the image data without decompressing the image data. ~~further comprising the processing of:~~

~~multiplexing said converted electric information, which is difficult to recognize, and said reproduced image data, to output; and~~

~~selecting said multiplexed data or said reproduced image data to output.~~

- 5 -

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A storage~~ Memory medium according to claim 9, wherein the reproducing step is a step of reproducing the specific information from the recording medium that recorded the image data. ~~a program for executing the processing of generating said specific information is stored herein.~~

12. (Currently Amended) A storage ~~Memory~~ medium according to claim 9, wherein the reproducing step is a step of reproducing the specific information from another ~~said first recording area is provided on a first recording medium, and said second recording area is provided on a second~~ recording medium.